

The High Cost of Juvenile Justice



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Juvenile
Law Center
advancing the rights and
well-being of children in jeopardy

The national story

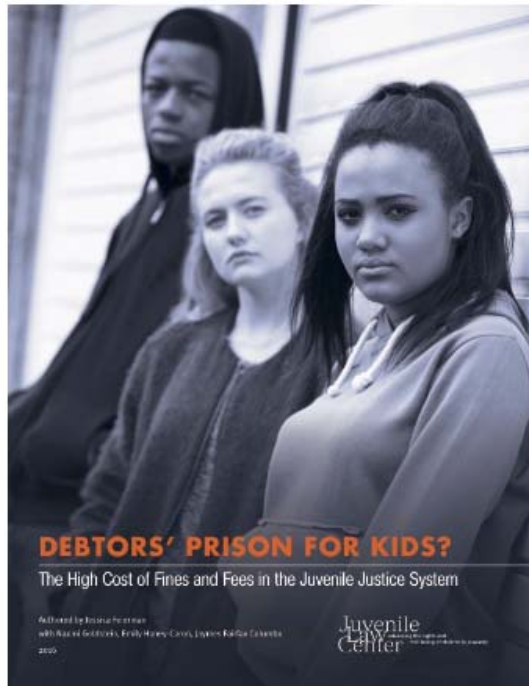


Dequan Jackson, 16, at his home in Jacksonville, Fla. After Dequan was charged with battery at age 13, he and his mother were unable to pay \$200 in court and public defender fees, which extended his probation by more than a year. Charlotte Kesi for The New York Times







Shayra Hill, now 22, was kept on juvenile probation as a teenager because she was unable to pay her court fees. (ED HILLE / Staff Photographer)

Debtorsprison.jlc.org



Full report

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-  [Download toolkit for eliminating costs, fines, and fees](#)

Scant attention has been paid to the financial burdens imposed on youth and families in the juvenile justice system, or the financial and legal consequences to youth and families. To address this gap, Juvenile Law Center conducted statutory research in all 50 states and the District of Columbia; surveyed individuals with experience with juvenile costs, fines, and fees; and solicited a criminology study on the connection between costs and recidivism and the implications for racial disparities in the juvenile justice system.

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Fees Established by State Law

TYPE OF FEE ▾

DECISION ▾

0

1

2

3

4

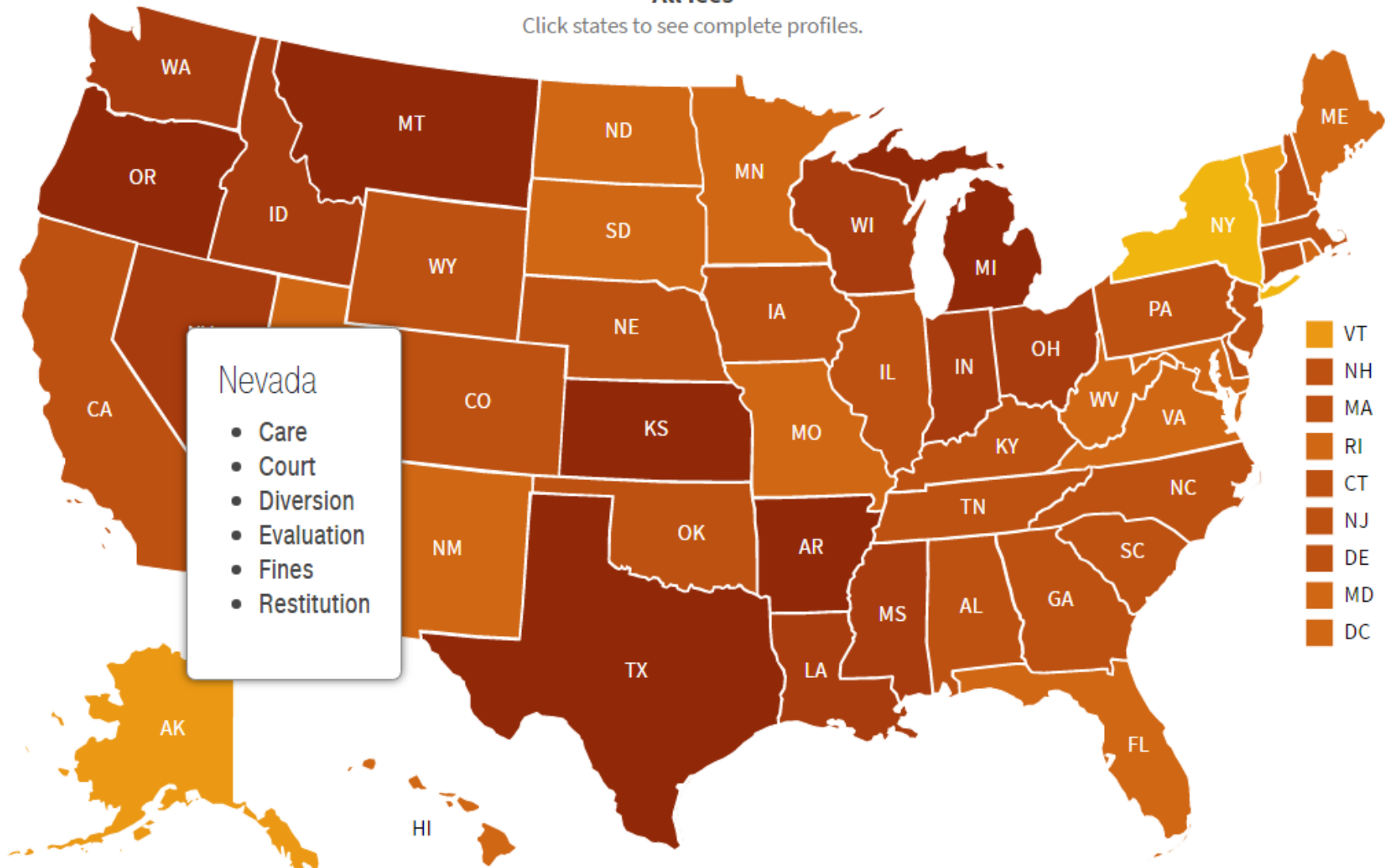
5

6

7

All fees

Click states to see complete profiles.



Consequences for failure to pay

- ❑ Petition filed
- ❑ Extended probation
- ❑ Incarceration
- ❑ Civil judgment
- ❑ More court visits
- ❑ No expungement
- ❑ Debt



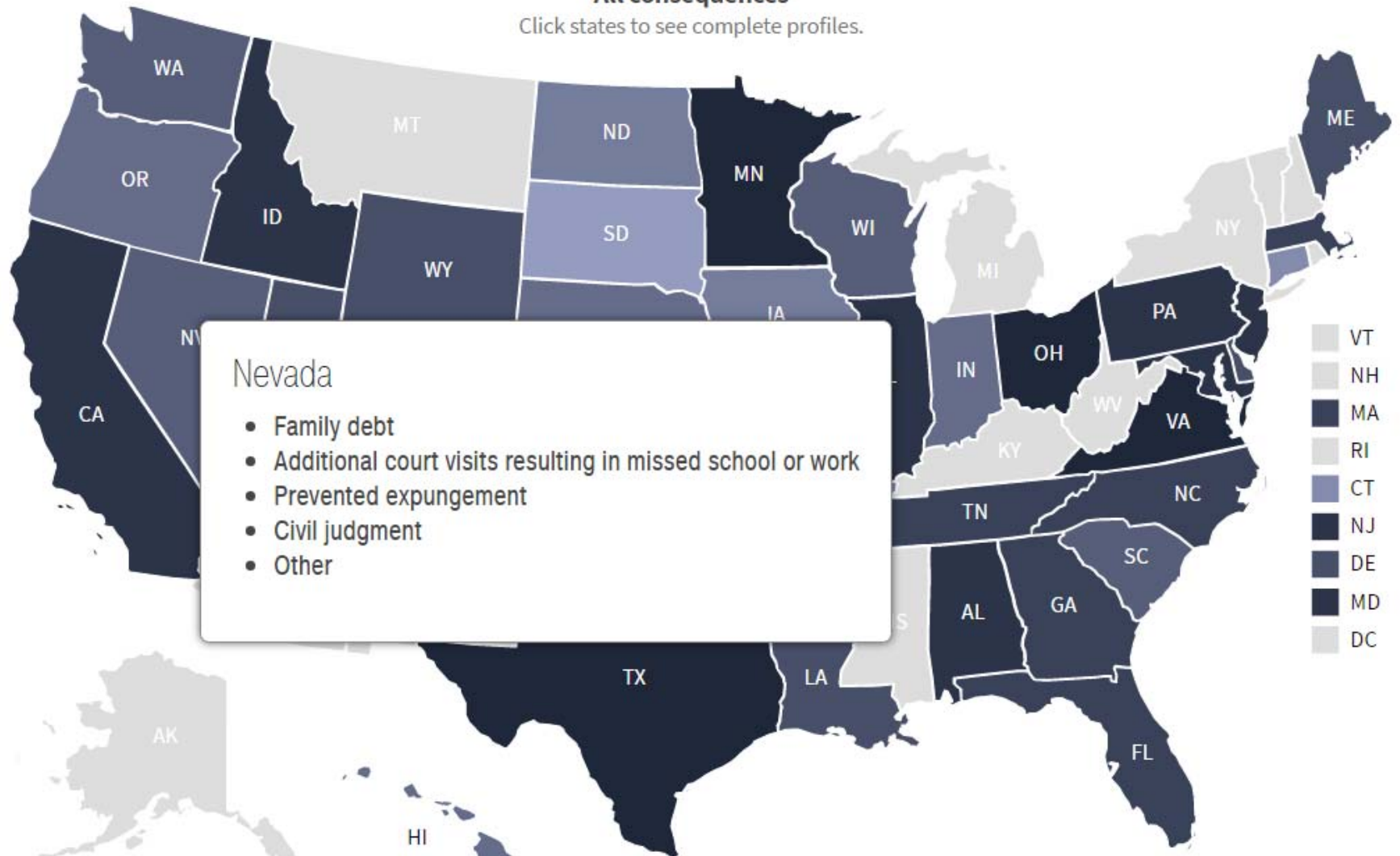
Consequences reported by survey respondents

CONSEQUENCES ▾



All consequences

Click states to see complete profiles.



Problems of Fines and Fees for Youth

- Impractical
 - Youth have limited or no access to money
- Undermines rehabilitation
 - Destabilizes families
 - Leads to increased recidivism
- Increases racial disparities in justice system

DOJ Recommendations/ Legal Authority

The constitution demands unique protections for youth in the juvenile justice system in light of their diminished culpability and greater prospects for reform:

- ❑ Presume that young people are unable to pay
- ❑ No punishment without determination of ability to pay
- ❑ No discrimination, including disparate impact
- ❑ Consider whether fines or fees comport with rehabilitative goals of juvenile justice system

Contact

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